

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2797

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 7186

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MNUC PARM KS FR CA

SUBJECT: ROK NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANS

REF: (A) SEOUL 6989 (B) SEOUL 6900 (C) STATE 195214

FOLLOWING ARE SUBSTANTIVE PORTIONS OF LETTER TO AMBASSADOR
DATED SEPTEMBER 11, FROM YOUNG KU YOON, PRESIDENT, KOREA
ATOMIC ENERGY RESEARCH INSTITUTE:
BEGIN QUOTE:

NEED AND JUSTIFICATION FOR OUR INSTITUTE'S NUCLEAR FUEL
TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH PROGRAM

KOREA'S DEMAND FOR ENERGY IS INCREASING AT A RATE OF
8 PERCENT PER ANNUM ON THE AVERAGE DURING THE PERIOD OF 1961 TO
1974. OUR DEPENDENCY ON IMPORTED OIL FROM THE MIDDLE EAST EXCEEDS
50 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL ENERGY NEED SINCE 1971.

CONSIDERING ALL ENERGY OPTIONS INCLUDING THE MAXIMUM
UTILIZATION OF DOMESTIC RESOURCES, KOREA HAS NO ALTERNATIVE
OTHER THAN PURSUING A MAJOR NUCLEAR POWER DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM TO MEET EVER INCREASING DEMAND FOR ELECTRIC POWER
(APPROXIMATELY 20 PERCENT PER ANNUM ON THE AVERAGE DURING THE
PERIOD OF 1961 TO 1974). FOR A SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF

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THE NUCLEAR POWER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IT IS ESSENTIAL

THAT WE HAVE THOROUGH PLANNING FOR ALL ASPECTS OF FUEL CYCLE AND ACQUIRE BASIC CAPABILITIES IN THE FIELD OF FUEL CYCLE TECHNOLOGY.

THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS OF OUR INSTITUTE ARE ADDRESSED TO THE SUPPORT OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED NUCLEAR POWER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF BASIC CAPABILITIES IN THE FIELD OF FUEL CYCLE TECHNOLOGY. OUR PROJECTS RELATING TO FUEL CYCLE TECHNOLOGY INCLUDE CONSTRUCTION OF EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING (NOT PRODUCTION) PURPOSE FACILITIES FOR FUEL FABRICATION, REPROCESSING AND RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT.

IN ADDITION TO KOREA'S DOMESTIC NEED AND JUSTIFICATION FOR OUR INSTITUTE'S NUCLEAR FUEL TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH PROGRAM, FUEL REPROCESSING IS THE AREA OF FUEL CYCLE THAT IS OF GREAT INTEREST TO THE SOUTH AND NORTH-EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES. IF SPENT FUELS ARE TO BE SHIPPED FOR REPROCESSING EITHER IN THE UNITED STATES OR IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, THERE ARE TWO MAJOR PROBLEMS. ONE IS THAT OF PROHIBITIVE COSTS FOR TRANSOCEANIC TRANSPORTING HIGHLY RADIOACTIVE SPENT-FUELS AND WASTES, AND THE OTHER IS THAT OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE STORAGE. THESE PROBLEMS AND INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARD MAY WELL JUSTIFY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMERCIAL FUEL REPROCESSING PLANT FOR THE REGIONAL MARKET BY THE MID-1980. KOREA IS PROMOTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL CENTER FOR FUEL REPROCESSING AND RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT BY MULTI-NATIONAL COOPERATION. KOREA WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH A REGIONAL CENTER. IN PREPARATION OF SUCH MULTI-NATIONAL UNDERTAKING WE ARE ACQUIRING BASIC CAPABILITIES IN THE FIELD OF FUEL REPROCESSING.

STATUS OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES IN THE FIELD OF NUCLEAR FUEL TECHNOLOGY

OUR INSTITUTE PREPARED "MARKET SURVEYS FOR FUEL FABRICATION AND FUEL REPROCESSING IN THE FAR EASTERN REGION" AND " PROSPECTUS FOR JOINT-VENTURE FUEL FABRICATION AND FUEL REPROCESSING PROJECTS FOR THE FAR-EASTERN REGIONAL
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MARKET" IN 1972.

WE FIRST DISCUSSED WITH THE NUCLEAR FUEL SERVICES, INC. OF THE UNITED STATES IN SEPTEMBER OF 1972, AND THEN WITH GENERAL ELECTRIC IN JUNE OF 1974, REGARDING POSSIBILITIES OF THE JOINT-VENTURE FUEL REPROCESSING PROJECT. BOTH AMERICAN COMPANIES DID NOT HAVE STRONG INTEREST IN FURTHER FOLLOW-UP.

OUR INSTITUTE REQUESTED A FEW TIMES SINCE 1972 THE FORMER UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION (U.S. AEC) AND THE PRESENT ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (ERDA) FOR TRAINING AT NATIONAL LABORATORIES TECHNICAL PERSONNEL IN BASIC ASPECTS OF FUEL REPROCESSING. FOR THE REASON OF SAFEGUARD, OUR REQUESTS FOR TRAINING WERE NOT MATERIALIZED. ARGONNE NATIONAL LABORATORY AND OUR INSTITUTE HAVE BEEN MAKING EFFORTS SINCE 1973 TO RE-ESTABLISH AN INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGE PROGRAM PRIMARILY COMPRISING ADVISORY AND TRAINING SERVICES IN THE GENERAL FIELD OF NUCLEAR ENERGY. OUR PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHING SUCH A SISTER LABORATORY RELATIONSHIP HAS NOT BEEN OFFICIALLY APPROVED BY EITHER ERDA OR THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

UNWARRANTED SAFEGUARD WORRIES RELATING TO OUR INSTITUTE'S NUCLEAR FUEL TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH PROGRAM

THE FUEL FABRICATION, FUEL REPROCESSING AND RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT LABORATORY FACILITIES THAT ARE TO BE CONSTRUCTED BY OUR INSTITUTE UNDER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CONTRACTS WITH FRENCH CONCERNS ARE BY NATURE AND BY SCALE NOT PRODUCTION PLANTS BUT MERELY LABORATORY FACILITIES THAT ARE SUITED FOR EDUCATING AND TRAINING OF OUR TECHNICAL PERSONNEL. THE LABORATORY FACILITIES ARE DESIGNED AND CONSTRUCTED FOR THE PURPOSES OF PRODUCING TECHNICAL PERSONNEL WHO ARE JUST KNOWLEDGEABLE IN THE FIELD OF FUEL CYCLE TECHNOLOGY, OF SUPPORTING KOREA'S NUCLEAR POWER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND OF PREPARING FOR KOREA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE FUTURE FUEL-CYCLE INDUSTRY FOR THE REGIONAL MARKET.

EVEN THESE LABORATORY FACILITIES ARE NOT UNDER OUR
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EXCLUSIVE CONTROL BUT UNDER STRICT INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY'S (IAEA'S) SAFEGUARD CONTROL AND, ADDITIONALLY, UNDER TRI-PARTY AND BILATERAL SAFEGUARD AGREEMENTS WITH SUPPLIER COUNTRIES FOR EQUIPMENT, NUCLEAR MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY. KOREA RATIFIED THE TREATY ON NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (NPT) IN MARCH OF 1975 AND IS TO ENTER INTO SAFE-GUARD AGREEMENTS WITH IAEA DURING THIS MONTH. IN

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 SEOUL 7186

EXDIS

ADDITION TO IAEA SAFEGUARD AGREEMENTS NUCLEAR SUPPLIER COUNTRIES SUCH AS THE UNITED STATES, CANADA AND FRANCE REQUIRE EITHER BILATERAL OR TRI PARTY SAFEGUARD AGREEMENTS BEFORE CONTRACTING FOR SUPPLY OF NUCLEAR EQUIPMENT, NUCLEAR MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY.

IT IS QUOTED FROM THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS THAT "NOTHING IN THIS TREATY SHALL BE INTERPRETED AS AFFECTING THE INALIENABLE RIGHT OF ALL THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY TO DEVELOP RESEARCH, PRODUCTION AND USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION AND IN CONFORMITY WITH ARTICLES I AND II OF THIS TREATY (REFER TO PARAGRAPH 1 OF ARTICLE IV OF NPT)". ITEMS RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER CONSULTATION WITH THE UNITED STATES.

1. OUR INSTITUTE IS AGREEABLE TO REVIEW WITH CONCERNED EXPERTS OF THE UNITED STATES KOREA'S LONG RANGE NUCLEAR POWER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND RELATED FUEL CYCLE TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

2. OUR INSTITUTE IS AGREEABLE TO REVIEW WITH CONCERNED EXPERTS OF THE UNITED STATES SAFEGUARD AND PHYSICAL PROTECTION ASPECTS OF OUR FUEL FABRICATION, REPROCESSING AND RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT LABORATORY FACILITIES.

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3. IT WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF BOTH COUNTRIES TO

PAY MORE ATTENTION TO COMMERCIAL ASPECTS OF NUCLEAR POWER
AND RELATED FUEL CYCLE AND MAKE MORE EFFORTS FOR CLOSER
COOPERATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF KOREA'S NUCLEAR POWER
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
REGIONAL FUEL REPROCESSING CENTER. END QUOTE.
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